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ABSTRACT

This instructional unit, which is intended for Australians working toward a Certificate in General Education for Adults, contains activities to help learners develop the skills and knowledge to read and write complex texts while examining human relationships and the family. Aimed at both native and nonnative English speakers, the unit contains texts focusing on sex roles, marriage, and motherhood for women in Australian society and issues of social concern regarding children. The texts also include some abstract concepts or technical details. After reading the texts, students are expected to produce reflective journals and texts incorporating a range of ideas, information, beliefs, or processes and to demonstrate control of the language skills appropriate for each reading and writing task. The unit, which also incorporates the learning outcomes of the family studies module from a children's services certificate program, is structured as follows: family structure (essay writing for public debate, writing for practical purposes, and reading response); socialization (writing for self-expression and knowledge); and human rights (reading for knowledge and practical purposes and for public debate). Concluding the unit are two background readings: a booklet, "Reporting Child Abuse," and an essay, "Do Children Have Rights?" (Patricia Edgar). (MN)

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ED 425 350

FAMILY STRUCTURE SOCIAL CHANGE

A PREPARATION FOR FURTHER STUDY COURSE

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Cathy Donovan



Hawthorn Community House

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Adult Education in
the Community

CE 077758

**FAMILY STRUCTURE &
SOCIAL CHANGE:
A PREPARATION FOR
FURTHER STUDY COURSE**

Cathy Donovan
Hawthorn Community House

A project funded by the Eastern Metropolitan
Council of Adult, Community & Further Education

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BACKGROUND READING

INTRODUCTION

This unit enables you to examine human relationships and the Family. By a study of family structure and social changes since the Second World War, you will gain an understanding of the position of women in the family in particular, and in society in general. We will focus on sex roles, marriage and motherhood for women in Australian society and issues of social concern regarding children.

This unit is aimed at both English speakers and Non-English Speaking Background people who already have basic skills in English and are wishing to increase their skills in order to continue in further study or year 12 programs such as the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

The Certificates in General Education for Adults (GCEA) is accredited by the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board and is recognised by educational and employment bodies across Australia.

The work that you do in this unit will enable you to complete Reading and Writing Module IV of the Certificate in General Education for Adults (Further Study).

The purpose of the Reading and Writing module is to enable learners to develop the skills and knowledge to read and write complex texts eg. to a standard suitable for Further Study. The texts will deal with general situations on the theme of Family Studies and include some abstract concepts or technical details. At this level you will be expected to produce texts that incorporate a range of ideas, information, beliefs or processes and have control of the language skills appropriate for the reading and writing task. This unit of Family Studies also incorporates the Learning Outcomes of the module Family Studies from Certificate III in Children's Services, and students enrolling in this course could apply for recognition of prior learning for this module.

It is recommended that you do this unit at your own pace and that you also have access to a teacher through enrolment in other units in a class based setting for advice and support.

The time it takes for you to complete this module will depend upon your current skills and experience and confidence as a student. There is no minimum time requirement. However, to undertake this unit it is expected that you will have been assessed at a literacy interview as having GCEA Exit level 3 skills in Reading and Writing.

CGEA READING AND WRITING MODULE IV SUMMARY OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

INTRODUCTION TO THE CGEA

The purpose of this module of the Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA) is to enable you to read and write a range of complex texts across a broad range of contexts at a level suitable for further study and to gain confidence in the necessary study skills to achieve this.

This Certificate is designed for people who have left school early and wish to complete a general education. It is also suitable for people who have not studied for many years and wish to brush up on English skills for further study.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Write a complex recount, narrative or expressive text e.g. short story, creative writing, poetry, autobiography
- Write a complex instructional or transactional text e.g. business letters, instructions, policy statements, minutes, manuals, brochures
- Write a complex report or explanatory text e.g. feature article, information sheets, textbook entry, report for workplace
- Write a complex argumentative or discursive text e.g. letters to the editor, publicity material, argumentative essay, newspaper articles
- Demonstrate that meaning has been gained from reading a complex:
 - Sustained narrative, recount or expressive text
 - Sustained instructional or transactional text
 - Sustained report, explanatory or informative text
 - Sustained argumentative or discursive text.

NB sustained means longer text such as a feature Age newspaper article.

A text is something that you read. It can be written or can be seen e.g. a documentary on television. Complex means that you will use English skills that demonstrate you can convey ideas and information at a depth suitable for entry into Further Study such as VCE or Certificate Level III or higher TAFE courses.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be based upon your written responses as well as activities in your Reflective Work Journal that are contained within this unit. Please work closely with your contact teacher for more detailed information about how much work is required of you.

COURSE READINGS

There are articles for you to read in each topic section. Please read these before answering any of the questions, as they will be the background information for you to think about your answers. Of course you can read more broadly than the articles supplied in this unit if you want to!

TOPIC
1

**FAMILY STRUCTURE
BACKGROUND INFLUENCES
OF CHANGE**

The structure of the family in the Western World has changed since the Industrial Revolution where work became specialised e.g. a person may work in a factory producing one product (cars) compared with a person on a farm producing many products - goods (eg. vegetables, meat, grains etc.)

People moved away from the land and farms to cities so as to work in factories and businesses. Before this both men and women worked together in the home based business of the farm. The man was the 'head of the family' and this type of family structure was called a Patriarchy. Women and men had defined roles and tasks, such as housekeeping for women and banking and management of the farm for men. Men inherited money and wealth, where women didn't. In marriage men had control of the money and decisions about management

When men left the farm to work in factories, they had to move to cities. In the cities they left the home and housekeeping tasks to women, who remained at home. The tradition of the man as 'head of the family' remained, but the man was not present in the home on a full time basis.

Cities expanded enormously, and so did urban life. Prior to the Industrial Revolution less than 10% of people lived in cities.

With this change came different expectations and experiences of work, leisure, marriage, children and schooling.

Work was changed and has continued to change as more goods are produced faster by using modern technology. Products were made that had never been dreamed of before e.g. typewriters. More products were available to buy and use in the home. People had money to spend on goods through earning wages. Work was mainly all done by men except for a few occupations such as nursing, teaching, typing housekeeping and cleaning and factory work in textile trades. The work done by women was lower paid.

Leisure time was introduced as people's work became restricted to certain hours and separated from everyday life, and people had money to spend on their leisure.

In the past people married for economic convenience or to expand land ownership (e.g. between adjoining farms). Romantic love became a reason for people to marry. Class division increased based on wealth and asset ownership

Societies changed too, as governments were formed, people joined Unions and communities grew with bigger populations. People fought for Rights such as pay and conditions. Schooling became a 'right' and by this century children were expected to stay in school until they were 12 years old.

The idea of childhood, when children should be protected and cared for, became accepted.

Women fought for equality at the turn of this century and gained the vote - the Suffragettes.

The end of the Second World War was the beginning of more changes to family structure and to women's role within it.

Today, more than 50% of women are in the paid workforce in Australia. After the Second World War, in the 1940's and 1950's, most women stayed at home. Society encouraged women to stay at home and many occupations would not allow you to work after marriage e.g. nursing and teaching.

Feminism and the Rights won through political campaigning brought women many freedoms e.g. The pill meant that women were in control of contraception and free to work or delay having children. Women have also gained access to many jobs and to training which they could not have gained entry to in the past (builders, pilots, politicians etc.).

Another important change has been the introduction of social welfare by governments. Social Welfare is the benefits, services and programs provided to individuals and families in order for them to satisfy basic needs and maintain an acceptable standard of living in society.

At the beginning of this century, social welfare was provided by charitable organisations such as the Red Cross

and Salvation Army, which were established in the late 1800's. They provided soup kitchens, clothing, night refuges and employment assistance. The government provided minor welfare assistance e.g. to the aged and a mother's subsidy to encourage women to care for their children as an alternative to fostering them-out.

Since the Second World War, (especially during the 1970's) the governments role in social welfare has expanded and we have many community programs and monetary benefits in Australia e.g. sole parent pension, unemployment benefits, housing assistance, health care, infant welfare nurses, community facilities, health care, legal aid, education, etc.

Divorce laws have changed since the 1970's, and married couples no longer have to give a reason or show cause for the breakdown of a marriage. Divorce rates have increased.

Migration since the Second World War has brought many different cultures to Australia and we are now a multicultural society.

Social values have changed: values about women's role in marriage, women and work, educational expectations of girls and boys, etc.

Social problems today include many new problems e.g. drug addiction, youth unemployment, increasing aged population, high divorce rates and family breakdown, domestic violence and child abuse etc.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL:

You will need to write your answers in a separate workbook.

*After reading the Course Readings attached at the end of this unit you will answer the questions in your Reflective Journal. The answers and reflections in this section will assist you in writing the **essay** and **informative brochure** that follows.*

Instructions on how to plan and write your essay and informative brochure are included in the Planning section which follows the Reflective Journal questions

PLEASE READ THE TEXTS SUPPLIED AT THE END OF THIS TOPIC BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- In your opinion, what are the social problems facing Australian society today? Please list them.
- How has family life changed since your mother/grandmother was a child (i.e. the 1950's)? Please describe.
- List and compare the differences in the structure and values of a typical 1950's family and a 1990's family in Australia:

1950'S FAMILY	1990'S FAMILY

- Describe the many types of family structure of the 1990's besides a nuclear family (wife and husband and children) e.g. sole parent families.
- Write your personal definition of *family* and what it includes.
- What does a family provide to its members and what is the purpose of living within a family structure? e.g. love, role models, protection from ... list your answers.
- What are the difficulties and/or stresses faced by families today? e.g. debt, unemployment, super mum image etc ... list your answers.

ESSAY

WRITING FOR PUBLIC DEBATE:
500 WORDS OR MORE

*How has the structure of the family
changed and are the effects
of these changes good for
children and women?*

There is some information to follow on How to Plan this essay,
Style, Editing and Quoting, Footnoting and Referencing.
This will be helpful information to assist you in writing this essay.

HOW TO PLAN THIS ESSAY:

STEP 1

Read the question carefully. You are being asked to write an argumentative essay that outlines a case for or against whether the changes to family structure are 'good' for women and children.

RESEARCH

STEP 2

Put any ideas you have about this topic on paper in rough note form - brainstorm. (which means to write anything that comes to mind without judging the idea good or bad. After you finish brainstorming you then decide which ideas to develop or discard.) After you have read the background readings on this topic and done the Reflective Journal, you should have some ideas and reflections.

Research can include:

- Background reading
- Discussions with other people to clarify your views and get ideas
- Listing the key words that are used in talking about this issue and looking them up in the dictionary to clarify meanings.

Underlining any sentences or facts you think make good points in the background readings so that you can use them as quotes later.

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STEP 3**OUTLINE A ROUGH PLAN**

Sort out the ideas which you want to use in your essay - tick them on your paper that has your notes in rough form (from step 2 above).

Decide which ideas should follow other ideas, and or which ideas are linked together.

eg. I might think changes to family structure are bad for children because they are not growing up in such a secure environment. How will I support or prove my opinion is worth listening to? Perhaps I will talk about the difficulties of sole parent families???? Or, I might argue that changes to family structure are good for women as it frees women up pursue individual goals as family responsibilities are now shared between extended families and partners. How will I prove or support this opinion? Perhaps I will talk about the increasing involvement of men in parenting roles and the advantages this has for children.

Who would I quote or what readings would I refer to, if I had the views above?

STEP 4

Write one sentence that is your viewpoint or opinion for or against the essay question in step 1 above. This is your main 'contention' or position on this issue. Before you begin writing any further, consider the following questions:

Who am I writing for?

Eg will the reader know anything about this topic?

Will the reader and I share the same view of what 'good' for women and children means, or do I need to define this?

Answers to these questions will guide you on the amount of detail to go into the content of your essay and the vocabulary to use.

Why am I writing?

You are writing to persuade the reader to your view.

What arguments do you think will achieve this?

What is the main point you want to get across?

Answers to these questions will guide you in the vocabulary you use as well as the tone or mood of your writing.

How should I present my writing?

You will need to know how to set out an essay, i.e.

Introduction, Body, Conclusion and about Style.

STEP 5

Add to step 4 above (your sentence that sets out your opinion or contention on this topic) by writing why the essay question is an issue. Step 4 and 5 are your Introduction. Your introduction will set out your views on the issue and set the readers expectations for the arguments you will use to persuade in the body of the essay.

Your essay should have an *Introduction*, *Body* and *Conclusion*.

DRAFTING

STEP 6

You will want to write out a draft. Your draft will be a rough attempt at the steps to follow. After you have done a draft (or two) you will be ready to edit for your final copy. Information on editing comes a bit later (see below).

TO BEGIN WRITING - DRAFT ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

Introduce the topic.

- Why is it an issue?
- What is your position?

THE BODY

Paragraph...

What are your main points to support your viewpoint?

- Use evidence eg. facts, quotes, statistics (don't forget to say where you got the information from in your essay. See below for how to do this referencing)
- You may have a number of points to make. Each paragraph may introduce a new point.

Paragraph...

- What argument and reasons does the other side use? (Eg. the people who have the opposite viewpoint to you). State what they would think believe about this topic and why you disagree with them.
- Useful linking words:
 - On the other hand...
 - In contrast to...
 - Although...
 - However...

CONCLUSION

Restate your position (use different words) and sum up your argument (key points).

NB Make sure that your paragraphs link together. Make sure that each paragraph contains one main point.

If possible, give your first draft to a teacher from the Provider you are enrolled with. They will give you useful feedback for developing the essay. Do not try to do a final copy without getting some feedback from your contact teacher.

STEP 7**EDITING**

You will need to check spelling, punctuation, and that your use of tense is consistent and/or correct throughout the essay.

Consider the following questions when reading your first draft:

- Is my view clear to the reader?
- Do I need to add any extra information?
- Do I need to reorder my points so that they flow more easily for the reader?
- Do I need to leave anything out (that is confusing or irrelevant)?
- Have I backed up my opinions with evidence (such as quotes or reference to expert opinion or sources of information).
- Do some points need more emphasis, or need to be expressed in different words?

Change your essay in whatever ways you think are necessary once you have considered the above questions.

STYLE

Style is about the way you write. Consider for a moment, the way we talk. We use different sorts of words and communicate differently when we want to argue a point, compared to telling someone some news about our lives or talking personally over a cup of coffee. In the same way, we write differently if we are arguing to persuade compared to if we are writing a letter to a friend, or a brochure that gives information. The purpose you have for writing will determine the style of writing you use.

- Your purpose is to take a stand on some issue and justify it.
- An issue is of human or abstract significance to more than one or two persons (eg. Death Penalty, Youth Suicide, Closure of Kindergartens etc.)
- Your aim is to persuade someone to your point of view.
- You might argue to justify a position or an interpretation or you might argue that some sort of action needs to be taken on an issue.
- The beginning of the argument will usually state your position on the issue and include some background information on why this is an issue.
- To justify the position taken above, the writer then must justify their argument with a logical sequence of points that support their view.
- The opposing point of view to the argument is presented and reasons why it is not acceptable are explained/argued at some point in the essay
- Many include some technical terms relating to the issue
- Paragraphs are connected using words and phrases associated with reasoning eg. Therefore, However, On the other hand etc.
- Emotive words will be used to persuade the reader eg. "should", "unwholesome" and express opinions.
- Quotes, statistics etc may be used to support the argument.

QUOTING, FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCING

REFERENCING: QUOTES

"There are now more de facto relationships than marriages among Australians aged 25 to 29," *The Age* 3rd April 1989.

In most formal writing assignments in TAFE Colleges or Universities, you would be expected to know how to use quotes, footnotes and references correctly. If you enroll at a University they will have a style guide which sets out the way they prefer you to quote etc. Below is a standard method which can be used.

Quoting is used in the following circumstances:

- Presenting primary data (information or research that has been recorded in writing eg. in a book, or evidence such as a table of statistics, a statement from a historical document, lines from a book)
- Presenting the opinions of other writers
- Presenting the ideas of an author that have been expressed in a clear and succinct way that will enhance your essay.
- Quotes can support your argument in an essay, but should be used sparingly. Use your own words wherever possible. Not acknowledging someone else's ideas by not quoting them is called Plagiarism and is a serious offence at Universities. Plagiarism is the practice of copying other people's words and ideas, and not acknowledging them.

DIRECT QUOTES

Direct quotes are used in texts when the writer wants to use the exact words of the person they are using as a reference or an authority in their argument.

Direct quotes use the exact words of the author.

Direct quotes are enclosed in inverted commas "..."

... Aggression is learned, just as compassion is. Steve Biddulph says "A boy needs to learn empathy and feeling and be shown tenderness if he is to be a sexually caring being" *Raising Boys*, Finch Publishing, 1997, p.47.

or You can acknowledge the source of your quote in a **footnote**:

... Aggression is learned, just as compassion is. Steve Biddulph says "A boy needs to learn empathy and feeling and be shown tenderness if he is to be a sexually caring being."¹

... (more writing of your essay)

¹Biddulph, S. *Raising Boys* Finch Publishing, 1997 p.47

INDIRECT QUOTES

Sometimes when you are reading or researching for your essay you will find some very interesting or important ideas that you want to use in your essay but are not going to quote word for word. This is called paraphrasing. It is OK, so long as you acknowledge the source of the ideas in a footnote.
EG.

Steve Biddulph views on the importance of showing empathy, feeling and tenderness to boys if we are to raise them not to be aggressive in relationships with others is very important.¹

...
... (more writing of your essay)
...

¹Biddulph, S. *Raising Boys* Finch Publishing, 1997 p.47

**INFORMATIVE BROCHURE
WRITING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES**

*Write a leaflet for families, which outlines
a range of difficulties, stresses and crises
a family may experience in Australia today
and some resources to help meet these needs
eg. Government agencies, community services,
support groups etc.*

Your leaflet should be a double sided A4 page and your final copy
should be set out as if for publication and
contain some graphics, headings etc.

HOW TO PLAN THIS INFORMATIVE BROCHURE:

STEP 1

Read the question carefully. You are being asked to write an informative brochure. What are the difficulties, stresses and crises families might experience today and what information would you need if you were wanting help or assistance?

To begin, brainstorm all of the stresses facing families today (eg. Alcoholism, economic hardship through unemployment etc., domestic violence, depression, etc.).

Find out what organisations and services can assist in a selection of the above areas for your pamphlet.

RESEARCH

STEP 2

Put any ideas you have about this topic on paper in rough note form - brainstorm. (which means to write anything that comes to mind without judging the idea good or bad. After you finish brainstorming you then decide which ideas to develop or discard.) After you have read the background readings on this topic and done the Reflective Journal, you should have some ideas and reflections.

Research can include:

- Background reading
- Discussions with other people to clarify your views and get ideas
- Listing the key words that are used in talking about this issue and looking them up in the dictionary to clarify meanings
- Underlining any sentences or facts you think make good points in the background readings so that you can find out how to get help on these issues.

Sources for Research:

Go to your local Council, Maternal Health Centres, Community Health Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Youth Centres, etc. for information as well as consulting the front section of the white pages of the phone book and your local Community directory supplied by the Council.

Whilst you are gathering information take notice of the way that other brochures are set out eg.

- Headings that use bold type
- Short, often incomplete sentences or dot points
- Plenty of visual information (graphics or pictures, graphs etc)
- Folded layout Etc.

STEP 3

OUTLINE A ROUGH PLAN

Sort out the ideas which you want to use in your information brochure/leaflet- tick them on your paper that has your notes in rough form (from 2 above).

Decide what illustrations or graphics would highlight the information and what headings you want to have. Think about the layout by comparing other information leaflets and brochures. You can cut and paste graphics and illustrations (artistic ability is not expected!).

STEP 4

Write a sentence summarising each of the topics you want to provide information on in your brochure.

STEP 5

Choose the layout and graphics you want to use. Decide how much space you will have and this will guide you in knowing how much information to include on each topic.

STEP 6

DRAFTING

You will want to write out a draft.

Your draft will be a rough attempt at the steps to follow. After you have done a draft (or two) you will be ready to edit for your final copy. Information on editing comes a bit later (see below).

EDITING

STEP 7

You will need to check spelling, punctuation, and that your use of tense is consistent and or correct throughout.

Consider the following questions when reading your first draft:

- Is my information clear to the reader?
- Do I need to add any extra information?
- Do I need to reorder my points so that they flow more easily for the reader?
- Do I need to leave anything out (that is confusing or irrelevant)?
- Have I made the brochure easy to read through the layout of the information?
- Do some points need more emphasis (eg. with the use of graphics), or need to be expressed in different words?

Change your brochure in whatever ways you think are necessary once you have considered the above questions.

STYLE

Style is about the way you write. Consider for a moment, the way we talk. We use different sorts of words and communicate differently when we want to argue a point, compared to telling someone some news about our lives or talking personally over a cup of coffee. In the same way, we write differently if we are arguing to persuade compared to if we are writing a letter to a friend, or a brochure that gives information. The purpose you have for writing will determine the style of writing you use.

- The reader will be referred to in a general way or not mentioned at all
- The text will be divided into sections (with headings) e.g. telling us where to go or what to do next
- Headings, diagrams, numbers, photos etc. are often used to make the information clearer
- Your writing will be concerned with procedures or instructions
- Your writing may also include objective comments on the usefulness, dangers etc. of the subject you are writing on
- Remember that you want the information to be clear and easy to read and understand.

Where do you call about child abuse?



NAPCAN (National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) is a resource centre that can give advice and put you in contact with a service close to

you for support and assistance. They are also a lobby group and can help you speak out on issues about Child Abuse.

Please call 9XXXXXXX.

Sample of one piece of information to include in a brochure.

Please see the booklet on Child Abuse in Topic 3 as a sample of this style of layout.

READING RESPONSE -
SELF EXPRESSION

I want you to listen.

This text can be found in the background reading for this topic. (Page 32.)

- In her letter to Fred, does Kate clearly express why she wants to leave the marriage? Why/why not?
- What do you think Kate meant when she wrote "I made a picture of our marriage and I put it on the wall (with your blessing, with everyone's blessing) and I created a life to go with it,"?
- Do you think that this narrative highlights any social issues about divorce and marriage breakdown?
- What expectations and stereotypes of motherhood and marriage do you think may have affected Kate and caused her to feel trapped?
- Kate says "I feel a bit like I've committed a crime". Who might she have committed a crime against?
- What does this narrative tell us about the social values of today?
- Do you think that this letter was 'badly written' as Kate said? Why/Why not?
- Compare this narrative to 'The In-Laws' story and the other articles in this section. What are some of the issues that might arise for Kate and Fred when her marriage ends, that are highlighted in these stories.

**FAMILY STRUCTURE
BACKGROUND INFLUENCES
OF CHANGE**

background reading

**PLEASE READ BEFORE
ATTEMPTING ANY WRITTEN TASKS**

Facts on Families

adapted from Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992

Introduction

At a time when the importance of the family, the durability of family structures and the ability of the family to provide care and support for its members are being increasingly recognised by government, social and welfare agencies, and the community at large, it is more important than ever to have access to timely, relevant data to aid in decision making and to support proposals relating to these issues. As the official government statistical agency, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is one of the most important sources of information on families.

What is family?

General community understanding of family is fairly broad. It may range from parents and their children (whether living together or not) to any group of people who are related to each other. To produce useful statistics on the family a definition is required which can be applied consistently to information gathered in surveys and censuses based on households.

The ABS uses the following broad definition to identify a family in statistical collections:

- Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related
- by blood, marriage (registered or defacto), adoption or fostering, and who are
- usually resident in the same household. Separate families are identified for

- each one parent family in the household.

This means for example, that in a household comprising a couple, their daughter and her child, two separate families are identified.

How many

It is estimated that in June 1992 there were 4,586,800 families in Australia. These families accounted for 84 per cent of the civilian population aged 15 years and over who usually lived in private dwellings. Eighty-five per cent contained a couple and 51 per cent of these had dependent children present. Nine per cent of families were one parent families. Other families made up 6 per cent of all families. Such families included those where there was a parent with only non-dependent children present and those where there was no parent, eg. Families of brothers and sisters only. Couples with dependents represented 43 per cent of all families in 1992, down from 47 per cent in 1982. Couples without dependents represented 41 per cent, much the same as in 1982. In June 1992, 53 per cent of couples with dependents and 39 per cent of those without dependents had both partners employed. In the main, couples without dependents were older and were more likely to be retired, reflected in the fact that 40 per cent of these families had neither partner employed.

Source: *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia, June 1992 (Cat. No. 6224.0)*

Family Fallout

Excerpt from 'Reinventing Australia' by Hugh Mackay

The traditional family unit, on which many of our most cherished notions about the Australian way of life depend, is in disarray. A family consisting of a breadwinning father, a stay-at-home mother and a couple of dependent children is now a small minority, accounting for less than one quarter of all families.

We are rapidly becoming the most divorced and the most married generation in Australian history because of our growing acceptance of serial monogamy. In the early 1970's, almost 90 per cent of Australian marriages were first marriages. By the early 1990's, that figure was drifting down to 60 per cent. It is now confidently predicted by most analysts of marriage statistics that roughly one third of contemporary Australian marriages will end in divorce, and - also for the first time in our history - the majority of divorces are now initiated by women.

At the same time, the Australian Institute of Family Studies predicts that by the end of the 90s, 22 per cent of Australian women will not have married by the age of 35 - a level higher than at any other time in Australian history.

Gordon Carmichael of the Australian National University (With This Ring, AIFS, 1988) estimates that up to 25 per cent of Australians born in the 1960s will never marry. Of course, many of the rising generation of Australians will become involved in long-

term de facto marriage relationships.

We still talk as if it is normal to stay married, but our definition of "normal" is slow to catch up with the demographic reality. It is true, of course, that most contemporary marriages won't end in divorce, but so many Australian families are now being affected directly or indirectly by divorce and by the redefinition of marriage that we will eventually have to find new ways of adapting to the increasing diversity of family styles and structures.

The emotional resources of contemporary Australians are being further drained by the effort involved not only in pioneering the redefinition of gender roles, but also in pioneering strategies for managing the increasingly widespread phenomena of broken families, blended families, single-parent families and step-families.

Considering the pace of the change, Australian society has already become remarkably tolerant of its new patterns of marriage and divorce. Part of the reason for this is the widespread belief that easier divorce has reduced the level of unhappiness associated with unsatisfactory marriages.

But while it is generally accepted that the new divorce laws are a step in the right direction, Australians are conscious of the high emotional price which families - especially children - have to pay for the relative instability of marriage in the 1990s.

Instability of marriage means, of course, the instability of the family: even those people who are most approving of easier divorce find it hard to bring themselves to the point of approving of the instability of family life, and there is widespread concern in the community about the long term effect on the children of this most-divorced generation in Australian history. The assumed effects on children of unstable family life range from a sense of confused values to the problem of divided loyalties.

It is not only the emotional consequences of divorce which are regarded as so potentially damaging to children. The financial consequences are also thought to disadvantage those children of a divorce who find themselves living in a household which is making do with half the resources available to the pre-divorce family.

Did we know that when, by the passage of the Family Law Act, we redefined divorce, we would also be redefining marriage, and reinventing family? Probably not, but that is certainly what has happened.

And yet, while acknowledging that it is much harder to define what a family actually is than what it used to be, Australians seem just as keen on the idea of the family as ever. As the reality of family life becomes less stable, the ideal seems to become even more attractive. Even while conceding that many families are desperately unhappy, and even while reflecting wistfully on some of the emotional ravages of their own childhoods, Australians continue to be generally convinced that family life

offers opportunities for emotional security and fulfilment which do not otherwise occur easily in our society.

Given this exalted view of family life in the Australian community, it is hardly surprising that one of the most significant sources of anxiety for contemporary Australians concerns the widespread breakdown of family life. If families are seen as providing an ultimate source of emotional security and personal identity, then it is not hard to imagine what Australians fear: they fear that massive dislocation of families will involve equivalent erosion of the sense of security and identity which families are expected to provide.

The growing problem of street kids in our cities is widely regarded as being attributable to the increasing breakdown of family life under the direct influence of a redefinition of marriage and an exploding divorce rate. Australians are beginning to realise what it means to say that the rising generation in our history, and we are gradually recognising that this generation will have to rise to challenges which their parents did not have to face on a large scale: the challenge of working out an identity in the context of a fractured family, and the challenge of replacing emotional resources depleted by the loss of a stable family structure.

Source: *Hugh Mackay is a social researcher and author. This extract from **Reinventing Australia** first appeared in *The Australian* 3/2/93*

The In-law's Story

Excerpt from 'Reinventing Australia' by Hugh Mackay

We idealise traditional family life but are finding it harder than ever to achieve in the age of divorce, writes Hugh Mackay in this latest extract from his book Reinventing Australia.

There has never been any divorce in our family, so we were pretty shocked when our second daughter came to us a few years back and told us that she and her husband were separating. They had been married for quite a while before they had any children, and they had two lovely little kids - our only grandchildren - and everything seemed to be going pretty well for them.

Our daughter had gone back to work and she often seemed tired and cranky. We advised her against going back to work because we thought the kids were too young. When she said she and her husband were going to get a divorce, the first thing we worried about was the kids. But she reckoned she was going to put them in after-school care.

That didn't really work out, and so they ended up coming to us three afternoons a week. Now, don't get me wrong, we love the children very much and they are a very important part of our lives. But we didn't expect we would have to go back to being active parents at this stage of the game.

Our daughter wouldn't tell us what was going on, and we have practically lost touch with our son-in-law. We

regret that because we liked him and we think that he is a very good father to the children. Now he only sees them every second weekend and for special occasions like birthdays, and we can see that it is very hard on them.

The trickiest part is that our daughter has had a couple of serious boyfriends since the split. One of them moved in with her for a while, and that really upset the kids. They confided in us that they couldn't stand him, and they hated the idea of him sleeping in their mother's bed.

There's this new bloke she's been seeing for the past year. He has been married before, and he has a couple of kids older than our grandchildren. Last Christmas our daughter insisted he should come around for Christmas dinner, bringing his kids with him, and it was pretty tense. We do our best to keep in touch with what is going on but this is not how we imagined life would turn out.

He introduced his kid's to us by our first names, and that's what they called us: Bill and Gwen. That was a bit of a shock - his kids were only about 13 or 14. You could see that our daughter was trying too hard. She was trying to make it into a proper family occasion, but it was pretty bloody obvious we were not a proper family at all.

Source: *Hugh Mackay. This extract from Reinventing Australia first appeared in The Australian 3/2/93*

We are a Family

Excerpt By John Elder

It's happening to more of us. We fall in love with someone who has children, move in together, and suddenly you're a step-family, just like that. For some, it's happy days right from the start. For most, it's not. John Elder reports.

Consider Catherine, 32, Sydney media buyer, professional life in control, personal life a yo-yo. She was married and had a baby, Milly. The marriage split four years ago and Catherine wandered between relationships until finding Steve and thinking him fabulous. That was about 18 months ago. Steve has a daughter with a wife from whom he is estranged.

You're thinking: isn't that lovely. No, it is not. They have step-family troubles. They have The Situation. This is Catherine's situation.

Steve, who declined to be interviewed, thinks that Catherine spoils Milly. Catherine feels the same way about Steve's child, Margaret.

She tells me, "You're dealing with Margaret, 7. It's hard. She's such a precious little princess. She's not a caring child, like Milly. She's very self-focused. She's getting better though, I suppose. When she came over for the weekends, she'd walk in the house and turn the music on and do what she wanted. That's stopped now. The last time she came over ... she's got this habit of going to the toilet and not washing her hands or wiping herself. Steve was in the shower and I said, 'Come back here and wipe your

bottom and wash your hands and flush the toilet.' Sometimes I feel like saying 'Get into your room.' I'm pretty much allowed to discipline her. It is hard though. You don't know if your overstepping the line. It's still very much them and us."

Catherine and Milly, now 5, are living with Steve. When we first speak Catherine tells me she is moving back to her flat in McMahons Point. She says, "We were having a drink and I said, 'Steve, I can't be with someone who doesn't like my child.' He went 'Yeah, I know.' I was floored. We talked about breaking up. As we always do. We're thinking of getting counselling."

Then she tells me about the heart of it. "Steve didn't want to take on the father role, he'd made that clear all the way. He just didn't like her. Pure disdain. He wouldn't go out in public with her because she might misbehave. You'd see the hair on the back of his neck stand up. I used to ask why. He'd say, 'Look, it's just that she's naughty. She doesn't respect me.'"

"I used to say, 'Steve that's fine, but I wouldn't respect you, either. Get to know her first. Get a bit of friendship happening.' We fought about it a lot. ... continues to page 14.

Source: *The Age: Sunday Life* magazine 31/1/98 p.8

Working it Out

Excerpt By Kate Nancarrow

For some women, it's not enough to juggle children and career - they want to get to the top of their profession too. A handful have proved it's possible. But, says Kate Nancarrow, at what cost?

The 30 executives file into the chic little restaurant on Fitzroy's Brunswick Street for one of their regular lunches. On this sunny Thursday, Café Guernica is closed to everyone except those who have reached the peak of their professional life. There's the publisher, the advertising executive, the communications consultant who employs 40 ("I don't like the term public relations"), the fashion designer and the accountant. All executives, all board members, all winners in the world where work is the be-all and end-all. And all women.

They meet regularly like this to talk, to swap ideas and business cards. "Ooh a hosiery delivery business. Oh, I need that. I never have time." But mostly, they meet to enjoy being with other women like themselves.

Many make it clear that this is the only women's group they would consider joining. They don't feel as comfortable in groups of women who complain about glass ceilings or tuck-shop rosters. Nor with whiners who grieve about their career disappearing while they were on maternity leave.

Some have that slightly over-fed, over-watered, over-stressed look of many a high flier. Others, however, are like architectural drawings of thin

streamlined success - everything about them screaming, "I'm in control of my life, weight, wardrobe and work."

There's lots of chat and hellos. The Melbourne chapter of Women Chiefs of Enterprises has a lot of catching up to do. There's the odd feminine quirk; tables are decorated with flowers, yellow ranunculus stuffed down a champagne flute. It could be a country wedding.

Elizabeth Boydell, organiser of the lunch and CEO of the Australasian Incentive Association, is buzzing. There are four new members to introduce; there's a lunch to be eaten. Mezze, she enthuses; lots of little things.

Over lunch she explains that she's been on the move since dawn. Somewhere, somehow, she also has to find time to cook dinner for 10, maybe 12, maybe 14, for friend and fellow member (and one time super chef) Sue Calwell, who has turned 50. The dinner is her gift to Calwell.

She tells of her visit to the market, buying things for the dinner - beef with mango salsa. "Haven't you heard of caterers?", another chief says incredulously.

And there it is, a telling moment in the lives of modern successful women. They work and work and work. But they like to have all the other bits of the pie chart that make up the Balanced Life. House, children, friends.

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But big houses need a lot of cleaning, so that has to be contracted out. Babies take a lot of time, so nannies have to be hired. And, since most nannies won't work the hours of a modern executive family, a day nanny and a night nanny have to be tracked down.

When they entertain there's no time for planning, shopping and chopping - Elizabeth Boydell excepted - so they entertain with food that someone else cooks.

This rarefied world is filled with women who resemble nothing so much as fathers of the 1950's, working long, long hours climbing the corporate ladder or building their businesses. But, in the modern executive family, there is no wife at home taking care of everything. Both partners toil long hours but, before they leave for work, they lay out cheques for the nanny, the gardener, the cleaner, the dog walker, the housekeeper/cook and the pool attendant.

Inevitably, for some it becomes so complicated they begin to question the point of it all. Some women are examining the way they work, the amount of time they work and indeed, their obsession with work.

Last year the UK head of Coca-Cola, Penny Hughes, 35, resigned, saying she wanted to spend time with her first baby. At her career level, she said, she couldn't do justice to both. Her move followed the resignation of Brenda Barnes, 43, who left her \$3 million post as North American head of Pepsi-Cola, when the job's increasing travel and time demands

meant she saw her three children only for minutes during the week and was dependant on videos to see them perform in school plays, or run in sports days.

Their moves caused some consternation. Would they be seen as a throwback to the '50's, an either/or life of work or motherhood and never both? Or a recognition that this level of work "success" leaves women (and men) with not time for a life.

US author Elizabeth Perle McKenna, in her recently released ground-breaking book *When Work Doesn't Work Anymore: Women, Work and Identity*, has explored female workaholism and found a generation of women, super-successful at scaling the corporate mountain but who get to the top shocked and exhausted at the cost of the climb.

McKenna interviewed hundreds of America's most senior women in finance, publishing, advertising, manufacturing and computers. They had done everything right: studied hard, joined top firms, worked long hours, never complained, fitted children in around their careers, worked even harder when the recession hit and, often, got to the top of the mountain. But when they looked at their lives, they were exhausted and disappointed.

McKenna proclaims her book as a critique of the workaday culture that women embraced enthusiastically in the 1960s and 1970s, but some US reviewers have savaged it as basically one long disappointed sob, by a rare and slightly obsessive group of women, that the pot of gold was not at

the end of the boardroom corridor.

Author Carole Tavris wrote in The New York Times Book Review that McKenna's book was aimed at "successful career women who have worked hard, been good and then been ill-treated by the professions to which they gave heart and soul. Hello? No men have felt thus betrayed?"

But McKenna's premise is that women's mass entry into higher education and the professions was not matched by a change in work culture. Women adapted to a work culture that was already alienating and all-consuming for many men but was, if anything, even worse for women desperate to succeed.

McKenna, a corporate escapee herself, found the most sustaining and enduring relationship in the lives of the women she interviewed was their career, reflecting the results of a study by Fortune magazine that found 75 per cent of women managers aged 35 to 49 felt they were defined by their work, yet were unhappy with what they had become. Almost 90 per cent of them wanted to make a major change in their lives.

And now more women are questioning this work obsession, wondering who decreed that work was more important and interesting than anything else, including raising children and community work.

And pondering the question: if work provides mental stimulation, a sense of achievement and financial independence - is more work even better? So when men, spurred by

writers such as Steve Biddulph, are examining their own balance between work and home, the real mystery is why so many women are so obsessed with work.

Source: *The Age: Sunday Life Magazine* 23/11/97 p.9

I Want You to Listen

by Janine Burke

The women's movement of the 1970s created a wave of discussion between women and led many to re-examine their lives, their roles - and their marriages. The five main characters in Janine Burke's first novel, 'Speaking', are very much women of that era. Lily, Pook, Madeleine, Beth and Kate have been friends for ten years. It is coming up to Christmas 1980 as Lily sets out to write the history of their lives and friendship, including letters, memos and diaries in her account. In this passage, Kate finds that a letter is the only means by which she can tell her husband about her feelings of being trapped in their marriage.

Thursday, 22 December, 1980

Dear Fred,

I didn't want to write this letter. I thought I could explain it another way. But I didn't have the words. They would not come. So now I'm writing it down. But I'm not good at it. I thought we'd talk about it one night and I kept waiting for that to happen after the meal before the television and the children's stories and the telephone ringing and bed. I'd see the moment when we would talk always a little ahead of me and I'd wait for it to reach me but it never did. It just slipped past. Then I'd feel confused and start waiting again. You see I kept thinking that there was one right moment to tell you and if I could just catch that moment everything would be easy and clear and honest and I wouldn't feel so helpless. But now I'm writing. I'm trying to make the words do what I want but it seems, as I write, that when you come to the important things, the big things that make everything else stop, that there aren't any fresh words or words that take pain away and make it all come out right. It is as clumsy as talking, but

I can't see your face. And I stopped waiting for one moment to do magic for me. Writing it down might appear odd and you're probably wondering why your wife has written you a letter when you'll see her in a couple of hours. You might need time to think about what I'm going to say.

I, least of all, expected this to happen. I thought it would have been you. One day, some young woman, someone stronger than me. You know? Wives think about that a lot. We always wonder. Because it happens. It happens all the time. But it's me, that's the funny part. It's me who needs to go. This has to be explained and I really don't know what to say. It's just sort of fallen onto the page like a mistake. But it's not a mistake. There's no one to ask about this. There is only you and me and an enormous space between us, a roaring silence. Is this the way to do it? Is this the way it's done? I've rehearsed it so many times in my mind. I've walked around the house, alone, talking it out. But that was rather like a game and not like this at all.

Perhaps I should start by asking you a

question. It's one that never leaves me now but stays and pounds and echoes like a headache. And I'm sorry to be going about this in such a long-winded manner. Please be patient. I feel as though I'm explaining it to myself, too. Writing these words gives form, makes real for the first time, what has been shapeless and hidden. This is why it's slow. And because I write so badly.

I want to ask you, do you understand the life we made? We did make it. Something happened in the middle of it so it blocks me and I don't know who I am in it. Yet I have become another person despite it. Or perhaps this has always been me and now I have come back to myself. I was frightened at first until I realised that my fear was no use to me, no use at all. And anyway I realised that my fear was no use to me, no use at all. And anyway I realised I wanted this other self, I wanted to possess it as much as I had once desired other things, all the things we have, that surround us and make our life what it is.

We are like people in a picture, aren't we? A pretty picture. Inside the frame there we sit, still, an' holding hands. As though someone caught us once and froze us. Snap. I think it was me who did that, without meaning to and without knowing. Or did I know? This is what worries me, that somehow I knew all along what I was doing and I deserve to be judged for it. I made a picture of our marriage and I put it on the wall (with your blessing, with everyone's blessing) and I created a life to go with it. A big mirror to reflect it. Our house was built to our marriage. Or to my idea of it. Every little touch and every

lovely object that our friends admired was another brick. And now I take the house down. I feel I have dishonoured us both. I feel like a destroyer as though there is something bad in me that I cannot check. I suppose I am selfish. That's what my mother would say.

You were kind always and perhaps it was your kindness that made me scheme and hide. I felt I had to protect myself. I didn't think any of this would happen. It seemed convenient, legitimate, to run two lives that were harnessed together. One life for you and the children - and one life for me. I've always been such a good manager. But now it's all broken and what was separate and distinct has spilled. I can finally see how this has happened. I thought I could control it. Longer.

There was your kindness. It was like a fog and I used all the warm blurriness of our marriage to undermine it. And once I started there was no stopping and everything began to collapse from the inside out. I can't explain the sensation of falling and being still at the same time. I'd look at you and the children and I'd feel dizzy. This is how I've felt for so long now, as though speaking another language. I didn't want to keep lying but nor did I know how to tell the truth. What truth? It's grand when you write it - truth - but it wavers and vapourises when you try and grab it. Like distance shimmers in the heat. And it's never there when you reach it, the water you think you see, the oasis.

Your kindness suffocated me. But the lies are worst because they spread everywhere and invade our talk and

love-making and decisions. We saw the same world but for different stretches of time. Perhaps time changed for me. I used to be able to draw a circle around the things I wanted. I used to be able to make a list. And it's not that any of it was wrong or our life was hollow or stupid but that something came back to me, like something forgotten, like a ghost. But it is very alive, quite terribly alive, to me. And it won't go away because I have become that thing. This is why sometimes I don't know who I am and feel split and cracked wide open. At other times it's as though I speak another, private language and no one understands me. I jabber away. I wonder who that woman in the mirror is. Sometimes all I see are my eyes and then they grow smaller and all I see is my mouth and the words that come out of it are lizards and snakes and things that crawl. I'm a bit loony, as Danny would say. But I can't hide from this in the safe circle of our old love. If our love can still exist. Can it? And can we feed the children on it? I haven't written much about the children because it causes me so much pain and I stop being able to think straight at all. I become afraid. Afraid of myself, too.

Do you understand any of this? I've tried to describe things from within. I probably should have begun quite differently. I should have told you what you really want to know. I'm not in love with anyone else. I'm not having an affair. I'm not after a divorce. I don't care about the house and who has it. I've spoken to no one about this O.K.? But I am going to leave for a while at least, maybe for good. There is so much to arrange. I'm sorry to mess it up. Don't think for

a moment that I am so confused that I don't understand the full implications of what I'm doing. But I can't make you see what I've seen. I still can't really put it into words. I think of our life, the patterns, but I don't recognise them much now. It's like losing part of your vision. I wish it could be easier and that I was stronger and better than I am. I feel a bit like I've committed a crime. But, finally, I'm glad, well, relieved really that I've written all this down. And I hope I have the courage to take it to your surgery and hand it to the nurse at reception and then to wait for you to come home tonight and perhaps at long last we can talk.

Sometimes when I speak to you I don't think you hear what I say. I want to shout. I want you to listen.

Kate

By Janine Burke, *Speaking*,
Greenhouse Publications, 1984
And republished in:
Reflections on Marriage selected
and introduced by Hazel Hawke, The
Text Publishing Company, 1996.

SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is the process through which we learn the beliefs, behavioural expectations and attitudes of our society. These beliefs, expectations and attitudes have a powerful influence over the way we see and feel about ourselves as individuals and as females and males. The term "self esteem" is used to describe the way a person feels about themselves, and "self concept" is used to describe how a person thinks about her or himself.

Every one of us has absorbed countless messages (both spoken and unspoken) throughout our childhood about how to behave, what opinions to hold, what to think or not to think, what attitudes to have toward sex, love and relationships. These messages are absorbed through us observing our parent's as role models, through reward and punishment, through influences of the media, school, friends and peers, music, movies, books, etc. If, for example, one of your model's of behaviour has taught you that you should put other's wishes and feelings ahead of your own, you can be manipulated into feeling guilty simply for thinking of your own feelings or needs first.

Many women have lower, or less positive self-esteem than men. Researchers and writers, such as M. Poole in 'Idols, Ideals and Identity', say that women's low self esteem is linked to their upbringing, (socialisation) which reinforces that they are less equal to men, that they have less power and status in society.

As soon as a baby is treated by others in a way that fosters the development of skills, attitudes, or behaviour that is

approved of by society, the process of socialisation has begun. Socialisation may begin as early as when someone decides to wrap a boy baby in a blue blanket or a girl baby in a pink one.

Our upbringing teaches us, (socialises us) by reinforcing what is 'good' and approved of in our behaviour, thoughts and actions and discouraging or punishing what is 'bad'. For example, girls are rewarded for being modest, for thinking of others and caring for peoples comforts, for being gentle, passive etc. Boys are rewarded for being brave, strong, active and athletic, bold and showing initiative. Today attitudes to bringing up girls and boys are not so sharply defined, but there are still differences in attitudes and expectations about what behaviour is acceptable for girls and boys.

Whilst men still enjoy the majority of positions of power in work and politics in Australian society, women are beginning to break through barriers and enter powerful positions with status e.g. as politicians and managers. Writers such as Steve Biddulph, in 'Manhood' and 'Raising Boys', says that men are being brought up to 'pretend' and to develop an image that denies their true inner character and needs. "To learn to be the gender you are, you probably need thousands of hours of interaction with older, more - mentally - equipped members of your own gender. In our society, girls get this contact from women on a day to day basis, but boys rarely get it from men. Women raise girls and boys - and most primary school teachers are female. Most of the day, most of the time, men are usually not around. The result of this

lack of male contact is a problem we are all aware of: that in today's world, little boys often just grow into bigger little boys. These emotional children in adult bodies then spend their lives pretending." Biddulph, S., *Manhood*, Finch Publishing, 1994, P23. In addition, girls are outstripping boys academically and many educationalists are concerned that boys need improved confidence and greater input to assist them to succeed in a world where communication skills are increasingly more important.

Women today are torn between the pressure to gain work and succeed in a career and the desire to conform to popular images of a 'good mother' who is the main nurturer and carer of her children and family. "Today's media no longer glorify the housewife role. Instead, the spotlight has shifted to the celebrity 'supermum', she-who-has-it-all. In the meantime, the 'real mothering person' remains firmly in the closet." Maushart, S. *Goodweekend magazine*, August 2nd, 1997 *The Age* P14.

Socialisation is a dynamic process, and it is important to remember that we are not passive recipients. How we respond to the messages about society's rules and expectations, in turn influences those rules and expectations. For example, mothers in the 1950's would not consider going to work as important for a woman, whereas many mothers of the 1990's consider it essential to their happiness to have a career. Sex role conditioning, where we are taught how to behave as men and women, still teaches us that motherhood and caring for children is primarily a women's responsibility, but society no

longer excludes women from the workforce. This change came about after political pressure from the Feminist Women's Movement of the 1960's and 1970's. Women gained the right to subsidised childcare, equal pay, equal opportunity laws etc.

Sex role conditioning can also limit choices. Social stereotypes - for example, women are intuitive and men are logical - almost always vest power in males e.g. the power to make decisions. Power is about more than simply limiting choices: it is about restricting choices.

Women often lack economic power. Only recently in history have women been able to own property or have their own income. Women are still more likely to have lower paid jobs with limited opportunities for career advancement. Women are more likely to have to leave the workforce to care for children. Full-time parenting is not regarded as an occupation with status in our society.

Last century Women's Rights were opposed as it was thought that childbearing and childrearing would cloud their judgment and prevent them taking an equal role in the workplace. After the Second World War women were told to leave their paying jobs so as to go home and have children. Their jobs were given back to the soldiers returning from the war. Many women resented this and, in the 1960's, began entering the Universities and workplace in greater numbers until today where we have approx. 50% of workers being female.

However, whilst our expectations of work have changed, attitudes to

Motherhood remain similar. Mothers are still accountable for children's health, clothing, behaviour, and general development. The media maintains this image. We learn from (through role modelling and reward and punishment) and often repeat in our own lives, our mother's daily reality. If mother has low self-esteem and low expectations - makes sacrifices, puts herself last, and hides feelings of anger etc., then we learn to think and make decisions in a similar way.

So how does Socialisation work? What makes us behave the way we do? Think of all the people you know who can't relax, who are constantly unhappy, who worry about little details, who lack confidence. Think of all those who are aggressive and constantly putting people down. Think of all those who are cheerful and confident and always positive about life.

Many people have been taught to be unhappy. Their parents may have repeatedly made comments like "You're hopeless, you'll never amount to anything.", or "God, you're a nuisance.", or "You're fat . . . lazy . . . etc.". Labelling people, especially children, has the effect of making us internalise these messages. We live up to, or down to, our parents or carers expectations.

Who am I?

What kind of person am I?

Where do I fit?

These are the questions of identity which we base our lives upon as adults. Because of this we are affected deeply by statements about us which begin with "you are" such as "you are stupid".

We all learn socially acceptable behaviour. For example we learn at an early age to wear clothes in public, to wash our hands after meals, to brush our teeth, not to steal from shops etc. These social rules are taught to us by example (role modelling) and by being punished for wrong doing and rewarded for good behaviour, e.g. with praise.

We all learn about our gender from an early age. We learn what is expected of girls and boys. Shops have different sections of toys that target war toys to boys and dolls to girls. We are labelled 'sissy' if we are boys behaving like girls, and 'tom boy' if we are girls behaving like boys. Girls are taught to dress modestly, boys are taught to be proud of their bare chests.

Reflecting upon how you were socialised as a child, and how you influence others in their socialisation is an important part of understanding identity and human behaviour.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL:

You will need to write your answers in a separate workbook.

After reading the Background readings attached at the end of this topic you will answer the questions in your Reflective Journal.

The answers and reflections in this section will assist you in completing the reading and writing tasks that follow.

Instructions on how to write for self expression and for knowledge are included in the Planning section.

PLEASE READ THE TEXTS SUPPLIED AT THE END OF THIS TOPIC BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1** When you were young, what were the expectations that your parents/carer had about:
 - How far you would go in school?
 - What type of job you would have?
 - Whether you would marry and have children?
 - The appropriate style of dress and behaviour?
- 2** Were the above expectations different for the boys and the girls? Why or why not?
- 3** In what ways do we learn the expectations of our parents? How does a parent shape behaviour and instill values in their children? (Eg. what are the ways that parents show their approval or non approval, how does a parent teach rules and morals etc.)
- 4** Describe what you believe are the qualities of a 'good' person and a 'bad' person.
- 5** List some media examples that reinforce our stereotype of a 'good' or 'bad' person. Eg. In movies, the bad guy always gets caught, in magazines the ad for margarine show us that the caring mother is loved by her children.
- 6** What other influences are there on children's attitudes, values and beliefs besides parents? Eg. school.
- 7** How do parents decide what to teach their children? - what influences the parents?

ESSAY TOPIC ONE**WRITING FOR SELF EXPRESSION**

When you were growing up, were there any double standards regarding the way that boys in your families were treated/allowed freedoms compared to girls?

Please explain your answer in an essay. Your essay should be at least 500 words in length. (2 x A4 pages approx.)

(Double standards: a set of unwritten rules that guide society and are different for boys and girls eg. girls wear dresses, boys don't. In the past boy's got a higher education whereas it was thought unnecessary for girls)

Please see the information following on writing for Self-Expression.

OR

ESSAY TOPIC TWO**WRITING FOR SELF EXPRESSION**

How can we strengthen families to withstand the destructive influences in society today?

Answer this question with your own views and opinions.
Your essay should be at least 500 words in length (2 x A4 pages approx.)

Please see the information following on writing for Self-Expression.

ESSAY WRITING - SELF EXPRESSION

When writing about a topic that involves retelling personal experiences and reflections, you are concerned with personal truths. When your writing centres on your own experience you will find it much easier to speak from authority and to reflect and give personal opinions.

Don't worry about making errors in spelling, or about how your writing sounds when you first write it. Write freely what comes to mind on the topic first of all. After you have made this rough copy, you can go back and edit it.

AIM

STEP 1

What is your aim/theme/purpose in writing this essay? - think about the topic and question, what double standards you have experienced and why your family accepted those double standards etc

AUDIENCE

STEP 2

Who will be reading this essay? - e.g. It will be someone who doesn't know you. So you will need to decide how much you want to tell, and to make sure that what you do write doesn't assume any prior knowledge of the reader.

CONTENT

STEP 3

What are the 3 - 4 key points/ideas you will put into your essay? e.g. Boys are allowed more freedoms than girls as teenagers.

FORMAT

STEP 4

Think about essay writing styles (introduction, body and conclusion).

ORDERING

STEP 5

Think about which key points you want to come first, second etc.

LENGTH

STEP 6

How many pages do you need to write? This will guide you as to how much detail you need to go into.

DRAFTING

STEP 7

This will be a rough attempt.

EDIT

STEP 8

Check for errors and/or make changes.

WRITING PARAGRAPHS

Your writing may not please you because your paragraph structure doesn't organise your ideas well. There isn't one 'correct' way of writing a paragraph as their content and style depend largely on the purpose of your writing. In essays, where you are writing to a particular question or statement, paragraphs are written to contain an idea which you expand upon and new ideas mean the beginning of a new paragraph.

Paragraphs usually consist of several sentences that are arranged in a logical way so as to develop an idea. The main idea is contained in what is called the 'topic sentence'. The topic sentence can come at the beginning, middle or end of the paragraph - there is no strict rule.

e.g. *"Had I had those ringlets and peach-like cheeks, those dimples, all that daintiness, there would have been no danger of my being left high and dry, but as it was, I planted my feet further apart in their thick shoes and was glad of my trunk like legs. **Then I will be going to the University**, I said. I did not want there to be any misunderstandings. Yes, father said, like a kettle going off the boil. Yes, I suppose you must."* Grenville, Kate, *Lilian's Story*, Australian Print Group, 1986, p95-96.

Paragraphs in an essay usually range from 50 - 100 words, but it does not matter if there are more words. However, if your paragraph is too long it is harder to read. Short paragraphs, on the other hand, give the reader the impression that the idea is not fully developed.

HOW TO LINK PARAGRAPHS

- **Proper planning:** the links will often come quite naturally from good organisation
- **Repetition:** repeat a word or phrase from the last sentence in the paragraph to the first sentence in the new paragraph.
eg . . . "My brother was always too busy to help with the housework, and it was considered that he had more important things to do."
"Important things that I had to do, like studying for VCE exams did not let me off the hook from sharing in the cooking and cleaning . . ."
- **Use linking words and phrases:**
However . . .
On the other hand . . .
In addition . . .
Nevertheless . . .
Today, as then . . .
Moreover . . .

EDITING

Use this checklist to edit your paragraphs:

- 1 Do each of your paragraphs express a main idea?
- 2 Do your paragraphs link together?
- 3 Have you checked for spelling errors?
- 4 Have you given enough detail or included enough examples to develop your ideas?
- 5 Do all of your paragraphs relate in some way to the topic of the essay?

SAMPLE OF WRITING FOR SELF EXPRESSION

When I was growing up, in a typical Chinese family in particular, there were definitely double standards regarding the way that boys in my family were treated. They were allowed more freedoms than girls.

In a Chinese family, boys are considered the future hope and master of the family. They were exempted from any household chores and any domestic work. They were allowed to socialise with friends, even at a very young age, whereas girls were not allowed to go out of the house, especially at night unless accompanied by a parent or brothers.

Because boys grow up to be the Master and Breadwinner of the family, they were given higher education. For instance, a poor family will save up money in any way they can and will even go to the extent of borrowing money from the rich or an Association in order for their son to go overseas for an education. Girls are only given an education if the family can afford it, and up to a very ordinary level.

In my family, men are often the ones who make decisions and at meal times my brothers talked and joked while we girls just listened. We washed up after they finished. My sister is the eldest among my family, and then a brother is second eldest. However, my brother was always put in charge of all of us when my parents were not at home. Etc

(THIS ESSAY IS UNFINISHED)

Note that

- Personal responses and details can be included to add interest or humour
- Usually written in the first person - using personal pronouns such as I, my
- Retells event, memories and experiences as a narrative
- Most often written in past tense

WRITING FOR KNOWLEDGE

Describe and define the socialisation process. Explain how values, attitudes and beliefs are formed, changed and passed on in a family setting.

Your answer should be at least 500 words in length. (2 x A4 pages approx.)

Please see the information following on writing for Knowledge.

WRITING FOR KNOWLEDGE**STEP 1**

Read the question carefully. You are being asked to describe and define what Socialisation is and to explain how this process works in a family setting.

To begin write in your own words what socialisation means.

Next, look back at the answers in your reflective journal. How could your personal views apply to families in general.

For this essay you will need to write about the topic from the standpoint of an 'expert' who is relating factual information and not personal opinion.

RESEARCH**STEP 2**

Put any ideas you have about this topic on paper in rough note form - brainstorm. (which means to write anything that comes to mind without judging the idea good or bad. After you finish brainstorming you then decide which ideas to develop or discard.) After you have read the background readings on this topic and done the Reflective Journal, you should have some ideas and reflections.

Research can include:

- Background reading
- Discussions with other people to clarify your views and get ideas
- Listing the key words that are used in talking about this issue and looking them up in the dictionary to clarify meanings.
- Underlining any sentences or facts you think make good points in the background readings.

OUTLINE A ROUGH PLAN**STEP 3**

Sort out the main points you wish to inform about.

STEP 4

Write a paragraph summarising each of the points you want to provide information on:

You are not writing about a sequence of events or ideas, but about facts which are grouped into topic areas (Socialisation and how it affects the values we form eg. through role modelling, reward and punishment etc.). Each aspect of the topic might be expanded upon by referring to detail (eg. behaviour, timespan etc.) or by giving examples, or by comparing and contrasting, or by describing the types (eg. of parenting styles) and their influences.

THE INTRODUCTION**STEP 5**

This outlines what you are going to say. It should make clear your definition of Socialisation and give an overview of how this process affects the values etc. of family members.

THE BODY

This will include several paragraphs which enlarge upon your introduction and explain clearly, in a neutral and objective tone, the information you want the reader to know.

- Don't skim over points that need explaining.
- Don't assume your reader knows anything about this topic.
- Each paragraph should cover one aspect relevant to the main point.

THE CONCLUSION

This will sum up your main points for the reader.

DRAFTING**STEP 6**

You will want to write out a draft

After you have done a draft (or two) you will be ready to edit for your final copy. Information on editing comes a bit later (see below).

EDITING**STEP 7**

You will need to check spelling, punctuation, and that your use of tense is consistent and/or correct throughout.

Consider the following questions when reading your first draft:

- Is my information clear to the reader?
- Do I need to add any extra information?
- Do I need to reorder my points so that they flow more easily for the reader?
- Do I need to leave anything out (that is confusing or irrelevant)?
- Have I made the brochure easy to read through the layout of the information?
- Do some points need more emphasis (eg. with the use of graphics), or need to be expressed in different words?

Change your essay in whatever ways you think are necessary once you have considered the above questions.

STYLE

Style is about the way you write. Consider for a moment, the way we talk. We use different sorts of words and communicate differently when we want to argue a point, compared to telling someone some news about our lives or talking personally over a cup of coffee. In the same way, we write differently if we are arguing to persuade compared to if we are writing a letter to a friend, or a brochure that gives information, or relating information that is factual knowledge. The purpose you have for writing will determine the style of writing you use.

When writing in this style, your purpose is to write factual information on a topic. It is objective.

Writing in this informative style classifies and describes the phenomena of our world. We use language to talk about a whole class of things e.g. Families. In contrast, a personal description only talks about a specific thing e.g. My dog. Thus we do not use personal pronouns like "I" or "my".

e.g. The Family is the main way in which children are taught the difference between right and wrong in our society. = OBJECTIVE & INFORMATIVE

Not

My family taught me the difference between right and wrong from an early age. = PERSONAL & DESCRIPTIVE

Your factual information can contain:

- Classifications of different types in the topic area you are informing about (e.g. different types of socialising influences, different types of family structures, different types of methods for reward and punishment)
- Comparison of the different types of subjects (eg There are many types of ocean fish: Marlin, Leatherjackets, Ling, Tailor etc. or Smacking is no longer as socially acceptable as withdrawal of privileges.)
- An examination of the components (e.g. how do the parents socialise the children, what methods do they use or Blue Grenadier and Gemfish are ocean fish that can be casseroled in a tomato based sauce.)

STYLE

- Uses paragraphs and headings to organise the information in a logical way.
- Diagrams, illustrations, photos etc. are often used to add to the information
- Writes generally about a whole class of things rather than one specific e.g Families rather than my family, Lakes rather than Lake Eppalock
- Uses factual and precise language rather than imaginative or opinionated writing
- May contain technical vocab such as "socialisation"
- Uses a formal and objective style
- Does not use personal pronouns such as I and we etc.
- Does not include personal opinions
- Generally is written in the present tense (is, are, have, belongs to etc)

SAMPLES OF WRITING FOR KNOWLEDGE

For most Human Beings, early life takes place within a family setting. From birth onwards, the way in which a baby is treated by their parents, their relatives, their friends and peers, the education system and society will have a profound effect. Boys and girls quickly learn that different things are expected of them. They get rewards for different behaviour and attitudes . . . etc.

OR

eg ONIONS

Onions are a very good winter crop in the home garden. For best results it is important to choose the right variety for sowing at the right time of year in different climate zones. Generally, onions are classified as early, mid-season and late maturing types. In temperate climates like Sydney, sow early onions from March to May and mid season onions from June to July." Yates Garden Guide, Fontana/Collins, 1979 p.104.

OR

As it is impossible for young children to grow up in Australian society without knowing that there are specific ways to be male and female their play is also strongly influenced by their gender (Davies, 1989; Mac Noughton, 1995). This means that when staff observe children's play they may find children's understanding of gender, interacts in complex ways with their understandings of cultural diversity to influence who they play with, what they play and how they play. The following anecdote provides some insights into some of the ways in which this can occur.

SOCIALISATION

background reading

**PLEASE READ BEFORE
ATTEMPTING ANY WRITTEN TASKS**

Man Warrior, Woman Worrier

By Pamela Bone

Research has shown consistently that males are more aggressive than women. From a young age they are more difficult to manage and more likely to experience conflict with other children. However, PAMELA BONE reports that there are many reasons why the sexes have different attitudes to conflict.

At 12 months, Sarah takes her doll, lays it on the kitchen floor and covers it tenderly with a tea towel. At 18 months, Marius already behaves differently with men and women, being much more boisterous with men. At three, Benjamin, whose parents have never allowed him to have a toy gun, picks up a stick and runs around the yard shouting "bang, bang".

Where does it all start? There seems little doubt that the human male is more physically aggressive than the human female. It is one of the most consistent findings in psychological literature: it can be seen in the statistics for violent crime in any country in the world. In 63 psychological studies published in the United States in 1986, there was no category in which men were not more aggressive than women.

Opinion polls conducted before and during the Gulf war revealed significant differences in men's and women's acceptance of war. Up to 25 percent more men than women approved of the use of military force to oust Iraq from Kuwait. Does this

mean that the decision to kill large numbers of people to achieve a goal is an easier one for men to make than women? And if so, are males naturally more aggressive than females, or does society make them so?

Of course not every man is more aggressive than every woman; the consistent differences found in psychological studies are in averages. There are many gentle, pacifist men, and history has plenty of examples of women's willingness to wage war: Queen Boadicea, Catherine the Great, Queen Elizabeth I, Indira Ghandi, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher. But would the Gulf conflict ever have reached the stage it did had Iraq, the United States and all the member countries of the United Nations Security Council been led by women? Would there be as many wars if women ruled the world?

Dr Melvin Konner, an anthropologist at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, has said categorically that no, there would not. "A steady, massive, infusion of women into positions of power, in a balanced way throughout the world, should in fact reduce the risk that irrational factors - the 'Come on, make my day' (line from a Clint Eastwood movie) sorts of factors - will bring about an end to life on earth," he wrote in "The New York Times" in 1988.

"Political scientists and historians often argue as if there were no resemblance between fistfights and war. Anthropologists and biologists know better."

According to Dr Konner, sex difference in the tendency to do physical harm is "intrinsic, fundamental, natural - in a word, biological".

Few, however, would take such an extreme view, says Professor Margot Prior, director of clinical research at LaTrobe University. "There may well be a biological propensity for nurturing behaviour in girls and aggressive behaviour in boys. You can see it in the animal world. But what almost certainly happens is that these things, which are really just tendencies, are reinforced by parents, teachers, and by peers," she said.

Dr Prior is one of a team of researchers involved in the Australian Temperament Program, a study that is unique in the world in its scope. The study of 2000 Victorian schoolchildren began in 1983, when all the children were aged between four months and nine months. In the past eight years the children have been examined and their parents questioned regularly on a range of factors such as health, learning abilities and behaviour.

Dr Prior has found that in the first two years of life there is very little difference in the behaviour of girls and boys. By the time they reach kindergarten and school age, however, significant differences emerge; and the differences she says, are all to the disadvantage of boys in terms of human relations. On average, boys are more aggressive, more difficult to manage, more likely to be hyperactive and to have shorter attention spans. They are more likely to experience conflict in their interactions with teachers and other children. On

average, boys also have more difficulty learning to read than girls, and the study has shown a high correlation between children's inability to read and anti-social behaviour.

The study seems to indicate that aggression is learned. However, it is "really tricky" to draw this conclusion, said Dr Prior, "because there is also a lot of other evidence to say that aggression is innate".

Biological determinism, which says that such things as intelligence and behaviour are innate, is unpopular with many feminists and liberal-minded people because it can carry with it theories of racial dominance and rigidly defined roles for women and men. For those who hope to change the world for the better, it is preferable to believe that the propensity for aggression can be attributed to learnt gender roles and other social conditioning, and can be overcome by better parenting skills and educative programs.

The many parents who have striven valiantly to bring their children up outside defined sex roles, and have still ended up with macho teenage boys, might indeed shrug their shoulders and conclude that they are just born that way. Yet with the best will in the world, are we not so conditioned ourselves that it is almost impossible not to treat baby boys and baby girls in different ways, however subtly?

"Ein Indiana Herz kennt kein Schmerz" - the heart of an Indian brave knows no pain, little German boys are told; and little boys in just about any other country in the world

hear pretty much the same message. Even for parents who make a conscious decision to rear their sons and daughter equally, the pressures against turning their little boy into a 'sissy' are strong. And no matter how hard parents try, boys are going to be subjected to extreme pressures when they enter the outside world.

Most of the sex differences Dr Prior discovered during the eight-year study are "ironed out" by adolescence; one thing that does not change, however, is the higher level of aggression. "The male predominance in anti-social, aggressive and criminal behaviour goes on forever," she said.

Some recent research suggest that the male hormone, testosterone, circulating during early foetal life, might prime the male brain to produce a lower threshold of anger and a stronger "fight or flight" response. Testosterone poisoning, we call it jokingly.

"Men are certainly much more aggressive. You only have to look at crimes of violence in any country in the world to see that," says Professor Roger Short, a reproductive physiologist at Monash University. But are they born that way? One problem in answering that question is that there is no good measure available of what male aggression is, he says.

If you expose a female sheep foetus to male sex hormones you will produce a ewe that tries to mate with other ewes. There have been documented cases where human female feotuses were exposed to testosterone, and as children were much more "rough and tumble" than other girls, and preferred

toys like hammers and guns to dolls. There is no doubt, Professor Short says, that men's and women's brains have gross anatomical structural differences, and it is believed that these different "wiring patterns" are due to influences in intra-uterine life. Feminists, like Germaine Greer, who have argued that men's and women's brains are essentially the same "have simply got it wrong". To say they are not different is "arrant biological nonsense", Professor Short said.

On the other hand, "there are very powerful cultural reinforcements of gender roles. Even the names of babies are given in this culture brands them, like a big rubber stamp on the bottom, as either male or female".

Women also secrete testosterone, but in much smaller amounts. Women also express aggression, but they are much more likely to express it verbally than physically. Though words can hurt, they do not kill. When danger threatens women might fight to the death to protect their children, but they are much less likely than men to want to provoke a fight. Women, too, seem much less likely to be fascinated by guns and bombs and fighter planes, by the technology and the "fun" aspect of war.

Studies of toddlers have shown that little boys are more adventurous than little girls, and more willing to spend longer times away from their mothers, supporting the 'nature' theory. But other studies, where baby boys are "cross-dressed" in pink and girls in blue, and are observed to be responded to and handled by temporary caregivers as if they were the opposite sex, make it obvious that

nature is at least helped along by nurture.

Some men react defensively to any suggestion that male aggression might be responsible for wars. Others are too ready to accept guilt on behalf of all men, saying things like "Yes, it's true, and it makes me ashamed to be a man". Neither response, in fact, is valid, because whether the aggression is natural or learnt, it is something that has been imposed on them (and are not women usually responsible for little boys' early conditioning?).

To Margaret Mead's famous question: "What if an average boy and an average girl were raised in exactly similar environments?" the answer is likely to be that the boy would still grow up to be more aggressive than the girl, but the difference would be less marked than that existing between men and women in most societies today. The "feminist" view that socialisation is of crucial importance might be very beneficial, if it causes enough people to modify their child-rearing practices, Dr Prior says.

The propensity for aggression is both innate and environmental. It is influenced by biology and culture, nature and nurture, genes and learning. We are creatures of our biology; but we are also creatures of our intelligence. And as many women have already discovered, biology does not have to be destiny.

Source: The Age 27/3/91

No... girls here: Gender, multiculturalism and children's play

By Glenda MacNaughton

Learning from children's play

Young children's play provides a powerful mirror on their understandings of the social world about them. For early childhood staff committed to including multicultural perspectives in their programs observing children's play offers valuable information for their daily planning. As staff observe children's play they can gain insights into how children are understanding what it means to grow up in a multicultural society such as Australia. For instance, observations of children's play can provide staff with:

- insight into the accuracy of children's understandings of their own and other children's culture;
- information about any culture stereotypes children are using in their play or in their selection of play partners;
- understandings of children's current interests and preoccupation's that can be drawn on to develop their respect for and enjoyment of cultural diversity.

As it is impossible for young children to grow up in Australian society without knowing that there are specific ways to be male and female their play is also strongly influenced

by their gender (Davies, 1989; Mac Noughton, 1995). This means that when staff observe children's play they may find children's understanding of gender, interacts in complex ways with their understandings of cultural diversity to influence who they play with, what they play and how they play. The following anecdote provides some insights into some of the ways in which this can occur.

"No... girls here"

The setting:

Indoor block area.

The children:

Brian, male, five years old, Anglo-Australian.

Rashid, male, five years old, recently arrived from Pakistan.

Soon Lee, female, nearly five years old, Vietnamese-Australian.

Brian and Rashid were building a garage in one corner of the block area. Brian was using gestures and language to tell Rashid where to place the blocks. Rashid was placing each of the blocks where Brian suggested. Soon Lee approached the area where the boys were playing and asked if she could play too. Brian lifted a block and waved it in the air and shouted: "No bloody wog girls here!" Rashid imitated Brian's actions and words. Soon Lee ran off crying to where the

teacher was and explained what had happened and that she wanted to play with the blocks.

This small incident contains some insight about how gender and ethnicity can impact on children's relationships with each other. Rashid was learning about what being male in Australia meant from his friend Brian. In this instance he was learning that to be a boy in Australia meant yelling at the girls, threatening them with blocks and not letting them to play with the blocks. Soon Lee was learning that being excluded from the blocks was related to both gender and her ethnicity. For each of the three children their gender and their ethnicity in different ways was influencing their play in several ways:

- the boys were combining with each other to use the power of force and power of insult to exclude a girl from the block play area. This is not an uncommon occurrence in many early childhood centres (MacNaughton, 1995).
- both boys were involved in being sexist and racist in how they related to Soon Lee but Brian (an Anglo-Australian) was the leader in block play with Rashid. If this is placed within the wider historical context of relationships between black and white people in Australia there is a potential power relationship between the boys that has racial significance. Black people have been consistently excluded from positions of power within every sphere of institutional life within Australia (Bottomly & de Lepervsnche, 1984; Jennett &

Stewart, 1987; McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettman, 1988; Foster, 1988). Situating and making sense of Brian's and Rashid's within this wider social and historical context highlights the same feature of racism in the play. Brian led and Rashid followed. The way in which Rashid experienced power was by following Brian's lead in excluding Soon Lee from the play.

It is difficult on the basis of a small, isolated incident in play between three children to make judgments about what they are learning about living in a multicultural society. However, it does provide some flavour of how observing and analysing children's play alert staff to:

- the specific and different ways in which power can be created and maintained when boys and girls of different racial and/or ethnic backgrounds play together;
- specific ways in which children can produce racist and sexist actions and consequences in their play.

This information is critical in helping staff plan appropriate and effective strategies to encourage children to respect, accept and enjoy the cultural diversity of Australian life.

Even after physical conditions have improved, children may be afraid to let go in play because once control is lost, unpleasant memories may be triggered. The FKA Multicultural Resource Centre has developed resource materials for parents who don't value play, to explain why

others consider play a valuable process in early education.

There are some children who just don't like make-believe play. They prefer the kind of play where they are building and constructing-making models with blocks, carpentry, in the sand pit. It looks more like work but, if they are doing it for their own enjoyment, in their own way, then it is play. These are often the children who don't want to come inside for a story; they would rather get on with their game or examine a non-fiction book.

I think we sometimes neglect these children rather than thinking about ways to help them extend their own kind of play. The big boys who get bored often come out of this group. They can be presented with big challenges within their own approach to play. The first step may be to find them time and space for large projects rather than simply making, for example, block buildings that have to be taken down and put away in half an hour, or roads, rivers and bridges in the digging patch that are destroyed at the end of the day.

"Educating for diversity is essential. Human nature cries out for personal dignity and recognition. This is vital for learning. Teaching that incorporates a knowledge of cultural, gender and social class awareness contributes to preparing the future citizens of the nation and the world."

To ensure that planning decisions are based on a solid information base staff might find the following points useful to consider when observing children's play through the lens of multiculturalism and gender:

- create time to actively monitor children's play for extended periods, to assess the effects of the power relations in the play between children;
- focus on the question what are children learning about relationships in a multicultural, multiracial society from the way they are differentially experiencing power in their play?
- recognise that children's relationships build over time. It is important to watch their play relationships over a period of time to fully appreciate the way in which children may be experiencing, or not experiencing, power with each other.

Source: Dr. Glenda MacNaughton.
Department of Learning and
Educational Development, University
of Melbourne in *Resource, Issue 85*
Dec. 1995, *Newsletter of the Free*
Kindergarten Association
Multicultural Resource Centre

TOPIC

3

HUMAN RIGHTS

We are all human beings with equal rights . . . Unfortunately, our society often evaluates human beings on scales which make some people 'better' than others. Consider the following assumptions:

- Whites are better than blacks
- Doctors are better than plumbers
- Winners are better than losers
- Workers are better than the unemployed

- Bosses are better than employees

- Rich are better than poor, etc.

The Universal declaration of Human Rights attempts to set down in writing those Rights which it is believed all humans should have equally regardless of country of origin, race, gender, disability, age etc. It has been endorsed by the United Nations and signed by Australia and many other countries.

Universal declaration of human rights

(a summary)

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Everyone is entitled to all the rights in this declaration without distinction of any kind, (e.g. race, colour, sex, social origin, nationality, property, birth, politics, religion, etc.)
- Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person
- No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude
- No-one shall be subjected to torture or cruel or inhuman treatment
- Everyone has the right to recognition as a person before the law
- All are equal before the law and entitled to its protection without discrimination
- Everyone has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- Everyone has the right to privacy and freedom from interference with family, correspondence, home.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- Everyone has the right to leave his/her own country and return to it.
- Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- Men and women of all ages have the right to marry, and are entitled to equal rights within that marriage.
- Everyone has the right to own property
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (including the right to change religion or beliefs).
- Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion.
- Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country.

- Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to the realisation of their economic, social and cultural rights essential for dignity and the free development of personality.
- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and fair conditions of work.
- Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their family.
- Everyone has the right to education.

UN declaration on the rights of the child

- The right to affection, love and understanding.
- The right to adequate nutrition and medical care.
- The right to free education and full opportunity for play and recreation.
- The right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- The right to a name and nationality.
- The right to special care, if disabled.
- The right to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
- The right to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
- The right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
- The right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national or social origin.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL:

You will need to write your answers in a separate workbook.

After reading the Course Readings attached at the end of this unit you will answer the questions in your Reflective Journal.

The answers and reflections in this section will assist you in completing the reading and writing tasks that follow.

PLEASE READ THE TEXTS SUPPLIED AT THE END OF THIS TOPIC BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Refer to *Reporting Child Abuse* booklet on page 67

- Who was the information in this booklet written for? List as many audiences for reading this booklet as you can and give reasons for your choices.
- Comment on the effectiveness of the layout of this booklet and the language used e.g. Would it be clear and easy to understand if you were a childcare worker?
- Write step by step instructions for a childcare worker to follow if they suspect child abuse.
- Do you have to report child abuse in the case of Emotional Abuse?
- Is there any information in this booklet that you think might be misleading or confusing to the reader?
- What would a child need to know in order to get help, if you or they thought they were being abused?

**READING FOR
KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICAL PURPOSES****T
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*Read the booklet on **Reporting Child Abuse** on page 67.
Then write a short summary in your own words
which would be understandable to a
Child of 4 - 6 years of age, under the headings
below. This means using simple words.
In your summary only write what a young child
would want to know to get help if they thought
they were being abused.*

Use these headings:

- What is child abuse?
- How can I tell if I'm being abused?
- Who should I tell?
- What happens if I tell?

**READING FOR
KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICAL PURPOSES****THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION AGAINST ALL FORMS
OF NEGLECT, CRUELTY AND EXPLOITATION.**

Select a book/s from the children's section of the library suitable for children 4 - 6 years of age that would be a good starting point for introducing the topic:

A Child's Right to feel safe from harm.

Briefly describe the plot of the story and then write a plan for an activity for a 4 - 6 year old child that would build on this story and also highlights what children can do to protect themselves from physical abuse.

READING FOR PUBLIC DEBATE
HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

T Read 'Do Children Have Rights'
page 84 by Patricia Edgar

Answer these questions:

- Why do you think that children's rights need to be dealt with separately to human rights? Explain your answer.
- The United Nations report says 'the job of parenting is being devalued and with it the quality of children's lives and society's future.' Do you agree/disagree and why?
- Does the government give children too many Rights in Australia, as Mr Fischer says? Give reasons for your answer.
- What do you think core family values might be? Are these different today, and are they being undermined?
- To what extent should governments or the state be involved in protecting children's rights? Why?
- What laws and services exist in Australia to protect children's rights?
- Do you think that Patricia Edgar agrees with Mr Fischer's views on the danger of government intervention to family structure? Give examples from the text of Patricia's views to support your viewpoint.
- What do you think Patricia Edgar was hoping to achieve by publishing this article in the Age newspaper?
- Read 'Human Rights and children's rights'. Contrast this article with the view in Patricia Edgar's article that "It is not only counter-productive but also socially dangerous to have legal rights without reciprocal responsibilities, so the argument goes, as this devalues the social contract and leads to the attitude that rights do not come with responsibilities."

2 *Describe some play activities that could breakdown cultural stereotypes for children after reading the article: **No....girls here": Gender, multiculturalism and children's play** in topic 2, page 54*

HUMAN RIGHTS

background reading

**PLEASE READ BEFORE
ATTEMPTING ANY WRITTEN TASKS**

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The booklet *Reporting Child Abuse*, starting on the following page has been adapted from a publication produced by the Department of Health and Community Services, Victoria. Published in 1993.

Reporting Child Abuse

Child Protection Victoria

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Introduction

Children have the right to be physically and emotionally safe at all times. Children are the most vulnerable members of our community. They do not have the power to stop abuse. They rely on others to help them. The responsibility for making sure that children are safe and that their needs are met is shared between the family, the community and the State.

Child abuse damages children physically and emotionally. The initial effects and the long term consequences of child abuse impact on the individual, their family and the community at large.

Early identification and effective intervention can lessen the initial and long term effects of child abuse and promote recovery of the children and families concerned.

In recent years, the overall number of child abuse cases reported in Victoria has increased. However reports of sexual abuse are fewer than in other Australian States where mandatory reporting has been introduced. Interstate research indicates that an increase in sexual and physical abuse notifications occurs with the introduction of mandatory reporting.

The Victorian Government has introduced legislation which will require many professionals to notify Child Protection Victoria if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been physically or sexually abused.

What This Booklet Is About

This booklet has been developed to assist those whose work brings them into contact with children and who are required by law to report child sexual and child physical abuse.

It contains information about legislation; definitions and indicators of abuse; how to report abuse and how to help and protect children.

While the reporting of emotional abuse and neglect will not become mandatory, it is important that children are also protected from these forms of abuse. For this reason, this booklet includes some information about emotional abuse and neglect, as well as physical and sexual abuse.

The Law

Under Section 64(D) of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989*, any person may notify any instance of possible or known child abuse. However, under the new Section 64(1A), the following people are obliged by law to notify Child Protection Victoria if they believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from such harm:

- Legally qualified medical practitioners.
- Registered psychologists.
- Registered nurses.
- Registered preschool, primary and secondary school teachers and principals.
- Operators and owners of children's services centres.

- Employees of children's services centres who have post-secondary qualifications in the care, education or minding of children.
- Social workers, youth workers or welfare workers who work in the health, education, welfare or community services fields.
- Persons working as youth and child care officers for the Department of Health and Community Services.
- Members of the Police force.
- Parole officers and probation officers.

The above people are referred to as *mandated notifiers*.

As a mandated notifier:

- It is your responsibility to report a belief, based on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from physical or sexual abuse when you form this belief in the course of practising your profession.

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In other words, you will not be legally obliged to report if you encounter abuse in your private life or when working in a capacity that is not directly related to the professional affiliation under which you are mandated

- You must make your report without unnecessary delay.
- You are required to report each time you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for your belief.
- You do not have to be able to prove that the abuse has occurred.
- It is your personal responsibility to report your belief - it is not the responsibility of your supervisor, principal, senior or boss. If you are one of a group of mandated notifiers who share a belief, based on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from physical or sexual

abuse, then only one mandated notifier needs to make the report. However, you must be satisfied that the report was made promptly and that all of the reasonable grounds were included in the notification.

- Your identity as a notifier will remain confidential under the Children and Young Persons Act.

Although only mandated notifiers have a legal responsibility to report physical and sexual abuse, everyone has a moral responsibility to report all types of possible or known child abuse.

What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse is not usually a single incident, but takes place over time.

In Victoria, a child or young person is a person under seventeen years of age.

Child abuse includes:

- *Physical abuse*, which involves any non-accidental injury to a child by a parent or caregiver. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
- *Sexual abuse*, which occurs when an adult or someone bigger and/or older than the child uses power or authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It may include fondling of the child's genitals; masturbation; oral sex; vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object; or exposure of the child to pornography.
- *Emotional abuse*, which occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down, or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth and development.
- *Neglect*, which is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

How Can Abuse and Neglect Be Recognised?

Behavioural or physical signs which assist in the recognition of child abuse are known as indicators. The presence of a single indicator does not prove that a child has been abused. The repeated occurrence of one indicator or the presence of several indicators raises the possibility that the child may be experiencing abuse.

A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if they are under stress. There can be many causes of stress, including child abuse, and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress.

Physical Abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts.
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur

accidentally.

- Poisoning.
- Internal injuries.

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults.
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injuries).
- Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home.
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout.
- Being excessively friendly to strangers.
- Being very passive and compliant.

Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators:

Sexual abuse is not usually identified through physical indicators. Often the first sign is when a child tells a trusted person that they have been sexually abused. However, the presence of sexually

transmitted diseases, pregnancy, vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse.

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred.
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains.
- Experiencing problems with school work.
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age.
- Experiencing difficulties in sleeping.
- Showing behaviour such as frequently rocking, sucking and bitching.
- Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

Emotional Abuse

Physical indicators:

There are a few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delay in physical, emotional or mental development.

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying low self esteem.
- Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful.
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour.
- Being highly anxious.
- Showing delayed speech.
- Acting like a much younger child, for example, soiling or wetting pants.
- Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

Neglect

Physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger.
- Malnutrition.
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing, for example, summer clothes in winter.
- Left unsuppressed for long periods.
- Medical needs not attended to.
- Abandoned by parents.

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food.
- Staying at school outside school hours.
- Often being tired, falling asleep in class.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs.
- Displaying aggressive behaviour.
- Not getting on well with peers.

The presence of indicators such as those described above may alert us to the possibility that a child is experiencing abuse. It is important that anyone who has concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection contacts the local Child Protection Victoria office for assistance and advice.

Why Notify?

Notifying suspected child abuse can be the first important step in stopping the abuse and protecting the child from further harm.

All people delivering services to children and families have a responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of children.

The purpose of imposing a legal obligation to notify suspected cases of child physical and sexual abuse is to uncover serious hidden abuse to enable:

- An investigation and assessment of the situation.
- The protection of the child where necessary.
- Planning for long term help and protection of the child and their family. This may include liaison, joint decision making and resource provision with other

agencies such as:

- Police.
- Health services.
- Family and children services.
- Child care centres, kindergartens and schools.
- Community-based self-help groups and others.

Failure to notify suspected child abuse may result in the continued abuse of a child. Abused children may carry the trauma associated with their experiences into adulthood unless treatment, assistance and support are provided.

Child abuse rarely stops without intervention occurring and help being offered. You can help stop the cycle of abuse by notifying Child Protection Victoria when you suspect that a child is being abused.

When to Notify?

Under the new legislation, as a mandated notifier you will be obliged to notify Child Protection Victoria when you believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from such harm.

It may help you to think of a 'belief' as an inclination to accept rather than reject the proposition that a child has been abused and to think of 'reasonable grounds' as the observations, opinions, or facts which induce the belief in you.

Reasonable Grounds

You have reasonable grounds to notify when:

- A child tells you they have been physically or sexually abused.

- A child tells you that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (often as a child is talking about themselves).
- When someone else tells you, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling of the child, that they know or believe that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- Your observations of the child's behaviour or development leads you to believe the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- You observe signs of physical or sexual abuse.

Important Points

- You do not need to *prove* that abuse has taken place - you only need reasonable grounds for your belief.
- You do not need permission from parents or caregivers to notify, nor do you need to

inform them that you are notifying.

- You do not need permission from your department, agency or hospital to notify, but there may be procedural guidelines or protocol to assist you in making a notification.
- If you make a notification in good faith, that is, you believe you have reasonable grounds for your belief, then you cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification.
- It is a requirement of the Children and Young Persons Act that identify of the notifier remain confidential. However, you may give Child Protection Victoria written permission to identify you as the notifier or may inform the child and/or family of the notification yourself.
- If your report to Child Protection Victoria becomes the subject of a Protection Application to the Children's Court you may be required to give evidence (voluntarily or by subpoena) to the Court. In this circumstance it is sometimes difficult to keep your identity as the notifier confidential.
- If you are a mandated notifier, failure to notify your belief, when you have reasonable grounds, is an offence under the Mandatory Reporting amendment to the Children and Young Persons Act, and incurs a penalty of \$1,000 fine.
- If you are unsure whether you have reasonable grounds to notify, contact your local Child Protection Victoria office and discuss your concerns with a protective worker.

How to Notify?

To make a notification of suspected child abuse, contact your local Child Protection Victoria office as soon as possible. You will find a list of these offices at the back of this booklet.

If you need to notify after hours or at the weekend contact the Child Protection 24 Hour Line: 131 278 (toll free)

This service provides an outreach crisis response to all areas of Victoria.

When making a notification, the protective worker at the local office will ask:

- The child's name, age, and address.
- Your reason for suspecting that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse.
- Your assessment of immediate danger to the child or children

information may be sought about the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s).

- Your description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- The current whereabouts of the child.
- Any other information you have about the family.

Even if you do not have all the information you are still legally obliged to notify Child Protection Victoria of your concerns.

Helping the Child

When a child tells you they have been abused the child may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry, and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

However, it is important for you to remain calm and in control of your feelings in order to reassure the child that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

You can *show your care and concern* for the child by:

- Listening carefully to what they are saying.
- Telling the child you believe them.
- Telling them it is not their fault and they are not responsible for the abuse.
- Letting the child know that you will make a report to the appropriate authorities so that they can help stop the abuse.
- Telling the child you are pleased they told you.

If you suspect abuse, but the child has not told anyone, be aware of the emotional distress that the child may be experiencing.

Approach the child in a caring and sensitive manner and assure them that you are willing to listen and to help if there is a problem.

You will *not* be helping the child if you:

- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone.
- Push the child into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any direct questions of the child as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation).

- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others not directly involved in helping the child.

What Happens Next?

After you have discussed your concerns with a protective worker at the local office they will let you, as a mandated notifier, know if the matter is going to be investigated further. If Child Protection Victoria initiates an investigation you, as a mandated notifier, will also be informed of the outcome of the notification.

Child Protection Victoria's role is to:

- Provide advice where there is concern that a child or young person may be abused or neglected.
 - Investigate matters where child abuse and neglect is suspected.
 - Ensure that support is offered to the family to minimise the risk of harm to the child.
 - Take matters before the Children's Court if the child's safety cannot be ensured within the family.
- Supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children's Court.
- In all cases of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse, protective workers must consult with the Police.

The role of the Police is to:

- Deal with criminal matters which arise in child abuse and neglect investigations.
- Investigate and enforce Intervention Orders under the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*. Intervention Orders remove abusers from the home, which allows children to remain safely at home.
- Assist protective workers where there are concerns about the safety of workers and family members.
- Activate a criminal investigation whenever reasonable grounds exist for believing that a child has been physically or sexually abused.

Do Children have Rights?

By Patricia Edgar

Do children have rights? Too many, if we believe the conservative family activist groups and the Federal National Party leader, Tim Fischer. Too few, if we accept the arguments of Hillary Clinton, some child advocates and feminists.

Children do have rights, we all have rights, to the extent that governments embody those rights in law.

Mr Justice Michael Kirby said earlier in this series that "human rights are universal and indivisible - they inhere in human beings everywhere simply by our being human".

But child advocates argue that the rights of children need to be translated into legally enforceable rights.

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This puts the Federal Government's power to legislate to protect children's rights in the many areas covered by the convention beyond question.

It also means that Australia's implementation of the convention is subject to supervision and scrutiny by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Although the convention deals comprehensively and specifically with children's rights, the detail is left to

nations to work out and the obligations imposed are related to the resources available in each country.

The Federal Government will soon release for public debate Australia's program of action for the survival, protection and development of children, prepared by an inter-departmental committee over the past two years.

However, according to a recent UN report, the progress of children in industrialised countries, including Australia, is going backwards.

Economic and social changes mean that a significant number of children are living in severe poverty without basic nutrition, health care and education; and millions of children are being deprived of parental time and attention.

The extent of the process differs from country to country but the common strand in the UN report is that the job of parenting is being devalued and with it the quality of children's lives and society's future.

Mr Fischer (leader of the National Party) seems to believe that the Keating Government, by its approach to children's rights, is furthering the downfall of the nuclear family by intervention where it does not belong, and by legitimising alternative lifestyles and relationships.

Policy makers, he says, are delivering rights to children at the expense of family structure. The right approach, he believes, lies in restoring core family values while the issues of welfare support for children should be open to public debate.

Mr Fischer is not alone in questioning the wisdom of establishing a powerful bureaucratic parent.

The movement for children's rights grew from humanitarian concerns in the late 19th Century about the abuse and exploitation of children: harsh labour conditions, the lack of schooling, the physical hardship and emotional deprivation children endured and still endure in many countries.

The idea that children were property to be dealt with at will was challenged and children were "saved" from exploitative industrialists, negligent families and the vices of cities by government intervention. Child protection laws were introduced.

But more recently feminist writers have pointed out that even well-intentioned protection can result in oppression of the protected group.

And how do you deal with the parent, employer, teacher or individual who violates the principles of child protection if not through the state?

Babies and children, unlike other humans, cannot speak on their own

behalf or run their own rights movement. They are immature and not competent.

So another view argues that as they cannot be part of the social contract and assume responsibility and obligations in return for the rights they are given it is inappropriate to say that children have rights.

It is not only counter-productive but also socially dangerous to have legal rights without reciprocal responsibilities, so the argument goes, as this devalues the social contract and leads to the attitude that rights do not come with responsibilities.

Thus adult rights should not apply to children, rather, adults should act in the best interests of children.

In addition to the corruption of democratic values that may follow from the erosion of the social contract there are practical problems that will follow if children are given the same rights as adults.

For example, it is inconceivable that the Government would allow children the right to work given unemployment levels, trade union policies and the numbers of adult unskilled workers in the labour force already.

Nor are the schools likely to grant rights of self-determination to children which would seriously challenge the authority of teachers.

And if school attendance were

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optional the funding of the school system would be seriously undermined.

One of the difficulties in the children's rights debate is knowing just where the line should be drawn between rights for adults and rights for children. Most children are referred to juvenile courts for behaviour not considered criminal if committed by their parents such as truancy, staying out all night, drinking, sex and running away. Is this standard unjust, or is it in their best interests?

The experience of history and humanitarian principles have led to the UN convention and to the procedures we now follow, however imperfect and contradictory they may be.

It was the Australian delegation which was responsible for Article 5 in the convention which recognised the role of the family in children's rights.

Under the convention the state must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for the child that is appropriate to her or his evolving capacities.

Although the convention defines a child as below 18 years, it does not suggest an age of emancipation at which a right to independence from parents arises.

I believe that in guiding the development of children and setting

the rules, the proper decision-making body is ideally the parents and child together, with children assuming more responsibility and decision-making power as they grow. This is clearly a delicate process.

But the state is a necessary partner in the complex relationship involving children's rights because there are things some parents do not do, will not do and sometimes even cannot do. For example, if the issue is one of children's rights to participate in the cultural life of the society and to have some programs on television, it is appropriate that the state intervene on their behalf.

Children have the same rights as we all do, with the special qualification that the obligation falls on the parents to ensure those rights are recognised and fulfilled.

Parents rights in relation to their children are limited only by their failure to live up to their obligations and responsibilities.

Although the state has the power to intervene with sufficient cause, a state which assumes the role of bureaucratic parent without first making every attempt to support families in their efforts on behalf of their children will ultimately do damage to us all.

Crisis welfare intervention can only be a fallback strategy, and it will be costly. The important defence children have in this world is that they

have two parents who love them and care for them. When they do not, the child is vulnerable.

Resources will always dictate welfare priorities. Given limited resources, basic survival needs will be afforded more status than cultural needs.

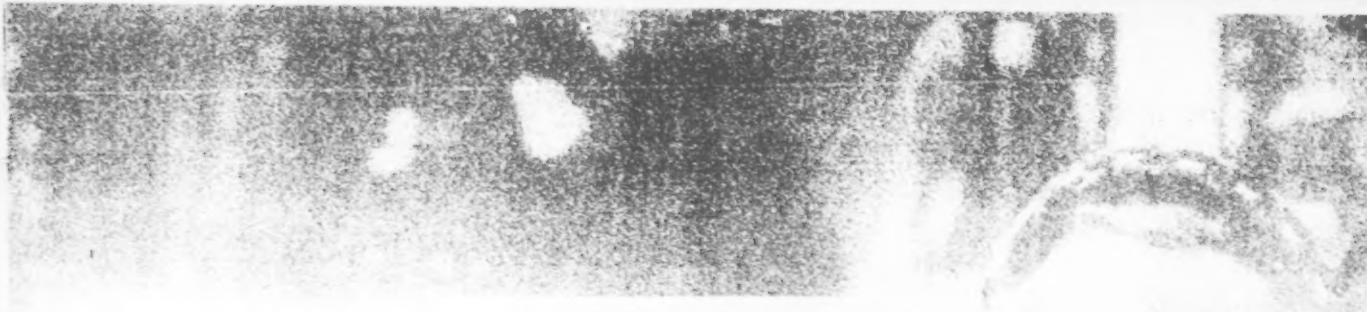
We would expect food, shelter, health care and education to have more priority than rights to self esteem and self-determination. Parents are in the best position to attend to these latter rights.

The concept of rights is one we struggle with as we try to live together in a shrinking world.

If you believe as I do that childhood is a stage of life and not just a preparation for adult life, then children are equally entitled to enjoy all international covenants on human rights. This position does not mean children can defy their parents. Children's liberation is another issue.

Dr Edgar is director of the Australian Children's Television Foundation

Source: The Age "Great Questions of our Time", January 13th, 1994



FAMILY STRUCTURE & SOCIAL CHANGE

A PREPARATION FOR FURTHER STUDY COURSE

By Cathy Donovan

This reading and writing course enables students to
examine human relationships and the family.

It is a study of family structure and social changes
since the Second World War, through which students
will gain an understanding of the position
of women in the family in particular
and in society in general.

The package focuses on sex roles, marriage
and motherhood for women in
Australian society and issues of social concern
regarding children.

This package is ideal for students at
level 4 of the CGEA.



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